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Teaching Strategies to overcome Internal Differentiation (Binnendifferenzierung) in teaching German as a Foreign Language

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The German term “Binnendifferenzierung”, is often referred to as internal differentiation, which signifies all forms of differentiation within a group of learners who are taught jointly, using variety of methods to deal with the differences between learners without permanently dividing the entire group (Klafki & Stöcker, 1991)¹. The first year German special Degree student group, in 2016, at the Department of Modern Languages, University of Kelaniya, consisted not only with individuals with different learning styles, such as visual and auditory learners, but also with different learning paces (slow learners and fast learners) and with different language proficiency levels. Therefore, it was questionable, whether it is possible, to achieve a common learning outcome by using common learning materials for the whole class. The assessment marks, teacher’s remarks about the level of performance of students in classrooms, were taken in to consideration, when preparing learning materials, which are compatible with the different learning styles of students, giving priority for slow learners, but at the same time, without interfering the learning pace of the fast learners. The objective of this research is to identify the pitfalls encountered in teaching German as a foreign language, for an internally differentiated learning group, and to introduce teaching techniques, which were used successfully in teaching German as a Foreign Language, for the selected research sample. This research is based on records of classroom observations, remarks of teachers and evaluation marks of students before and after implementing the suggested teaching methodologies. According to the findings of the research, it proves that there is a possibility for a multilevel classroom, to obtain a common learning outcome, by preparing separate learning materials, targeting different learning styles and paces of individuals while level tasks are assigned using variety of groupings (Sozial Formen) such as partner work, individual work and group work.

Key words: Internal Differentiation, Teaching Strategies, Overcome, Pitfalls, Language Teaching

¹ Klafki, W. (2007). *Neue Studien zur Bildungstheorie und Didaktik*. Weinheim: Beltz.